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Chakravorty, Saila
Confessions of Mr. Communalism

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CONFESSIONS OF MR.

Communalism

TEXT BY SAILA CHAKRAVORTTY
ARTOONS BY 'ALIAS' • PUBLISHED
BY READERS' CORNER • CALCUTTA

Confessions of Mr Communalism

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TEXT :

SAILA CHAKRAVORTY

ILLUSTRATION :

ALIAS

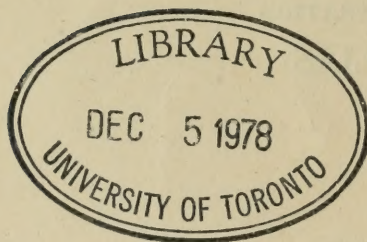


THE READERS' CORNER

5 SANKAR GHOSH LANE, CALCUTTA 6

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PREFACE

I beg leave to introduce Mr Communalism to you, my readers. I know he is more than well-known to you all. Sometime ago I had had the rare luck of having an interview with him, and that was practically the only source of inspiration which encouraged me to write these pages.

Believe me or not, even in this century of progress old things die very hard. Having some shreds of the old trend of thinking still left in me, I cannot bring myself to believe in the invulnerability of this monster, even though very few amongst us have been able to escape his sinister influence. Indeed, only a handful of men and women have been able to withstand him. We have lost many who worshipped him as the very god of war, and many more who did not. But the fact is that our own passions and prejudices gave birth to this monstrosity among us, and we made ourselves willing victims to his fell motive. Are we not, every one of us, a Dr. Jekyll and a Mr. Hyde entombed in a single bodily framework? It is little wonder that Mr. Hyde should kill Dr. Jekyll.

Maulana Azad recently made some observations about this monster. He said : This Demon of Communalism in Politics has caused the splitting up of India, and raised barriers, both material and psychological, between groups and communities.

Strange to say, I caught the demon quite unawares, and he responded to me in the frankest manner possible in one like him. He narrated the whole story

of his life—his adventures (mis ?), his mission, and lastly his reaction to the martyrdom of Mahatma Gandhi. I could easily read a change in him—a change for the better, to be sure. It was this that actuated him to make these observations, or rather confessions, in a genuine mood of repentance. Our countrymen today are deeply enmeshed in his foul net. For two years or more we have seen our country perilously throbbing on the edge of his blood-gilt dagger. Now or never : it is high time that we let him speak out his mind instead of act. Yes, we must stay his hands. Merely to hurl invectives at him while he goes on with his nefarious business is to wink at one's own follies and misdeeds. He may be the very devil incarnate, or he may be the stern hand of God that smites the devil in men at a tremendous sweep as in a lightning flash. The narrowness that lives in the hearts of men goes on swelling its boundaries, slowly and imperceptibly, as the ages pass by, till at last its roaring waves come to engulf humanity with a sudden fury. It flares up like fire and spreads like contagion. It tramples down the good and releases the forces of evil. It drinks the sap of life only to vomit out the blood of death. It crushes the seeds of harmony and growth, and cultures the bacilli of discord and decay.

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I am indebted for the art creations of "Alias", a boon companion of mine, but for whose co-operation my essays would have fallen flat on my readers. I also acknowledge my gratitude to my friends, whose help and appreciation have been instrumental in bringing out this collection.

S. C.

*"Religions are not for
separating men from one
another, they are meant
to bind them."—*

GANDHIJI

ONE

BIRTH OF COMMUNALISM

“**A**n offspring of the great Roman Empire of old, I was born amidst all the pomp and pageantry befitting the birth of a scion of that old imperial autocracy. The historians will testify to it,” said Mr Communalism in a reminiscent mood.

“Do you know the extent of damage you caused under the tutelage of your imperial parents ?” I asked him.

“Yes”, he said. “My Imperial Ancestors were dying for gold and power. They were searching for a golden recipe. The recipe was in my hands ; I labelled on it the dictum : *Divide et Impera*, and affixed to it proper dosages. It acted miraculously. I was invited to England by my imperial friends there. Then I found my way into India by an export liner bound for this country. It was a pleasant journey. The civilian officers were all attention to me. Perhaps you remember what Lord Elphinstone once said : ‘*Divide et Impera* was the Roman motto, and it should be ours.’...But this is all trash.....”



TWO

THE HEADQUARTERS

“G row up and raise thine hood,
Sharp be thy fangs,
Let fair be foul and foul thy good,
Fill ev’ry heart with pangs.

That was my lullaby. Do you understand ?” continued Mr Communalism, still in a reminiscent mood. “I was given my thumb to suck for a nipple. It was a lesson in self-help. I had a sharp-edged dagger to play with. No toys or other playthings. I was destined to be a tough guy. No trace of softness in me. Do you understand ?”

“Well, what about your nursery ?” I made bold to ask him.

“My nursery ? Why, it was at Aligarh, as all the world doth know,” he said pompously, and added, “Seeds of hatred were sown, large dosages of poison were daily administered instead of water ; presently the atmosphere was as foul as foul could be. The entire university drank deep of communal hatred and animosity.....”



THREE

THE GENTLEMAN WHO HAD
TWO WIVES

“Just after the Curzonian cut of Bengal, a gentleman chanced to occupy the coveted post of Governor of the eastern half of the province. He was Sir Bawmfield Fuller. He was fond of pulling one’s leg by fooling another. He had two wives. But he was foolhardy enough to cast aside his Hindu wife and take to the Muslim woman, over whom he doted like a fool filled with insane infatuation. Do you know why?” asked Communalism with a significant gesture.

“No,” I confessed.

“Oh, the idea!” sighed out Communalism with indescribable drollery in the eyes. “Well, it was my Cupid’s shafts, my Cupid’s shafts! My role as Cupid. A nice aim.” Suddenly he burst into a loud laughter.

“But what about the damsel of Turkey?” I ventured to ask. “Was she not shot through the breast by a pistol instead of Cupid’s floral shafts?”

“Yes, I know, but that’s all trash.....”



FOUR

THE SHIELD

“**T**he Shield is a heritage of the past. It is old. It is antique. But shielding is a novel art. It is the most modern technique of political fencing....Just imagine,” said Mr Communalism, “you are given (don’t ask by whom) a big shield and a sharpened sword, and fancy you have a creed different from your unarmed neighbour’s. What can you do? Rather what can’t you do? Can’t you chop his head off his shoulders? You say ‘No’. That’s cowardly. Certainly you saw Bengal during the Direct Action days? Didn’t you? The shield is of hard stuff, and once you begin wielding it, nobody dares to disturb you.” No, neither the sides, nor the centre.”

“But I have seen greater fighters with larger shields, mad with power liquor, trampling down human rights right and left, finally lie prostrate, cold and stiff, dreaming perhaps of empires nobody knows.”

Mr Communalism purred, “No nonsense please.”



FIVE

TOOTH FOR A TOOTH

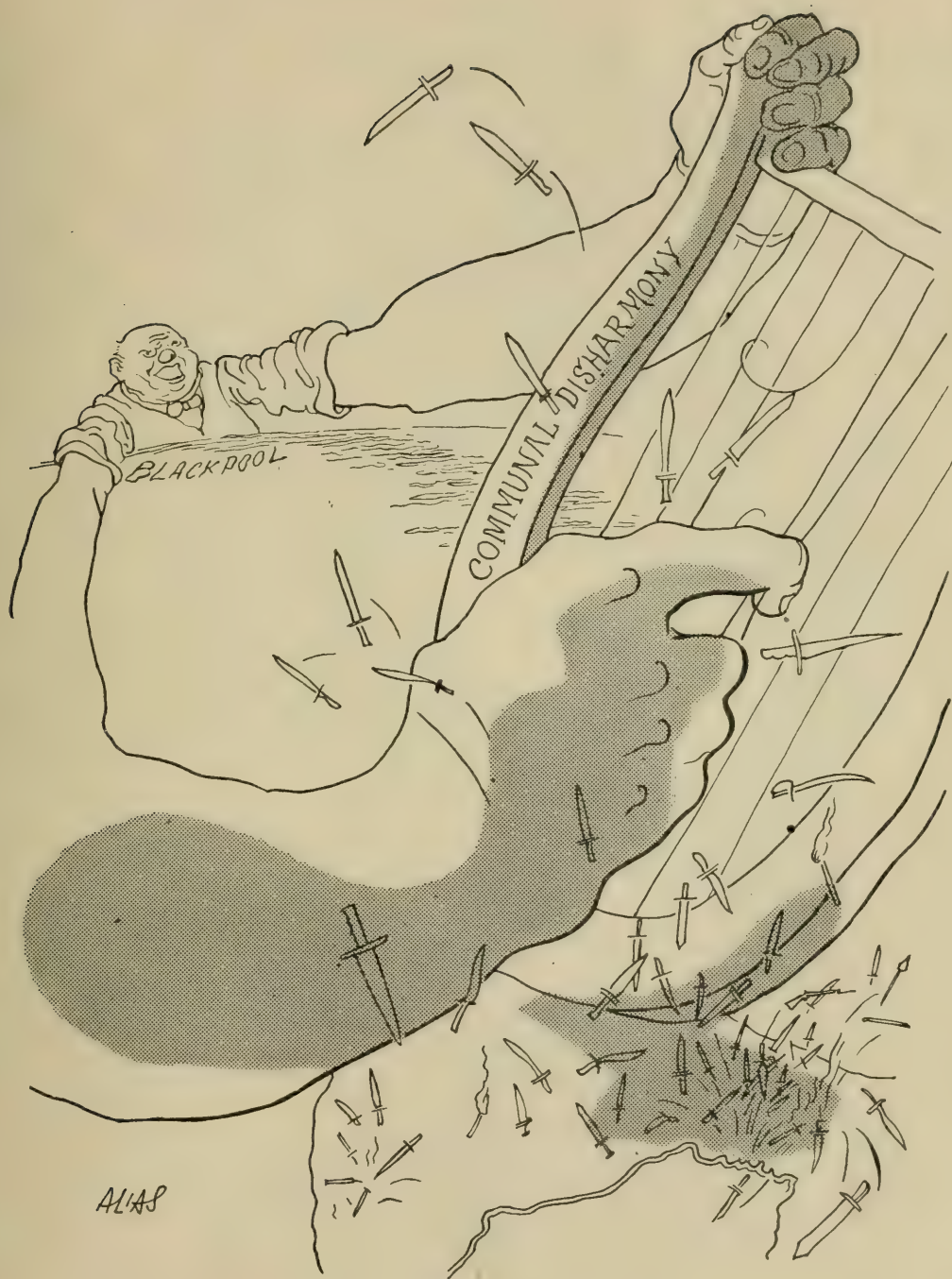
“**B**ut I am most fair,” continued Mr Communalism. “I never shower favours upon one party at the expense of the other. If one party has the initiative, soon the other has its retaliation. It is always initiative and retaliation. ‘Vengeance sleeps long but it never dies’, as they say.”



SIX

THE DISHARMONY

“**A**nd there was always the Chur-
chillian note of disharmony.”



SEVEN

JOINT RESPONSIBILITY

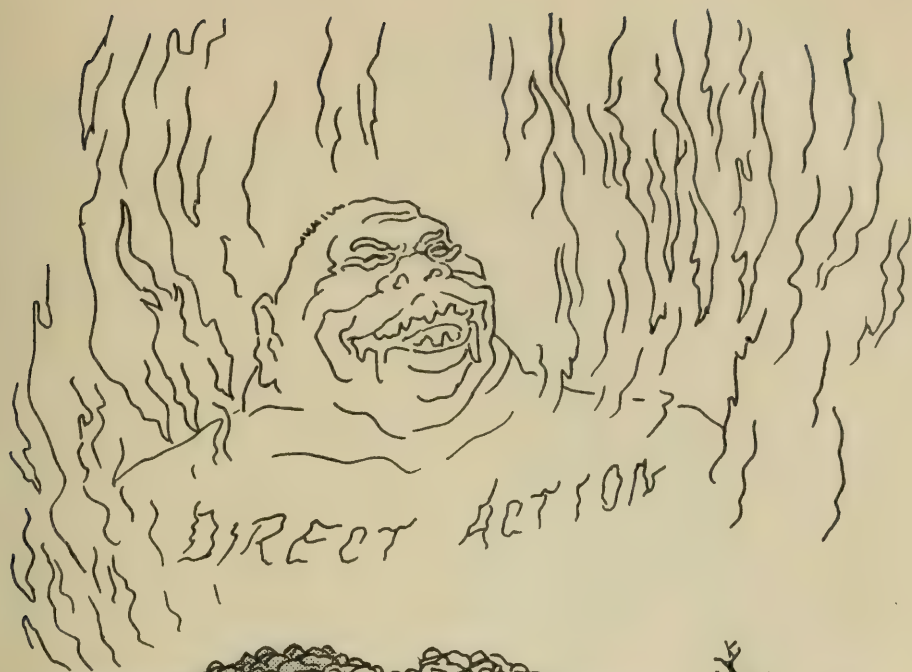
“**T**he Congress was marching ahead like a Colossus. The League was limping behind. It was a pigmy. The two were united in wedlock. The High Priest of Imperialism officiated at the ceremony. It was a marriage between two incompatibles. Thus resulted a three-legged race. The destiny of India lagged behind. *Tra-la-la-la*, I sang in merriment.”



EIGHT

ACTION TAKES ITS TOLL

“I have a scientific bent of mind. I have always delighted in making experiments. Hatred, suspicion, greed, love of power, these are the ingredients with which I prepared a new explosive that suddenly burst upon an unsuspecting population on that fateful day, the 16th of August, 1946.”



NINE

SEE, THIS IS INDIA !

“ **A**nd while the whole of this vast subcontinent was ablaze, the Britishers fiddled in ghastly delight. ‘See, this is India !’ was their refrain.”

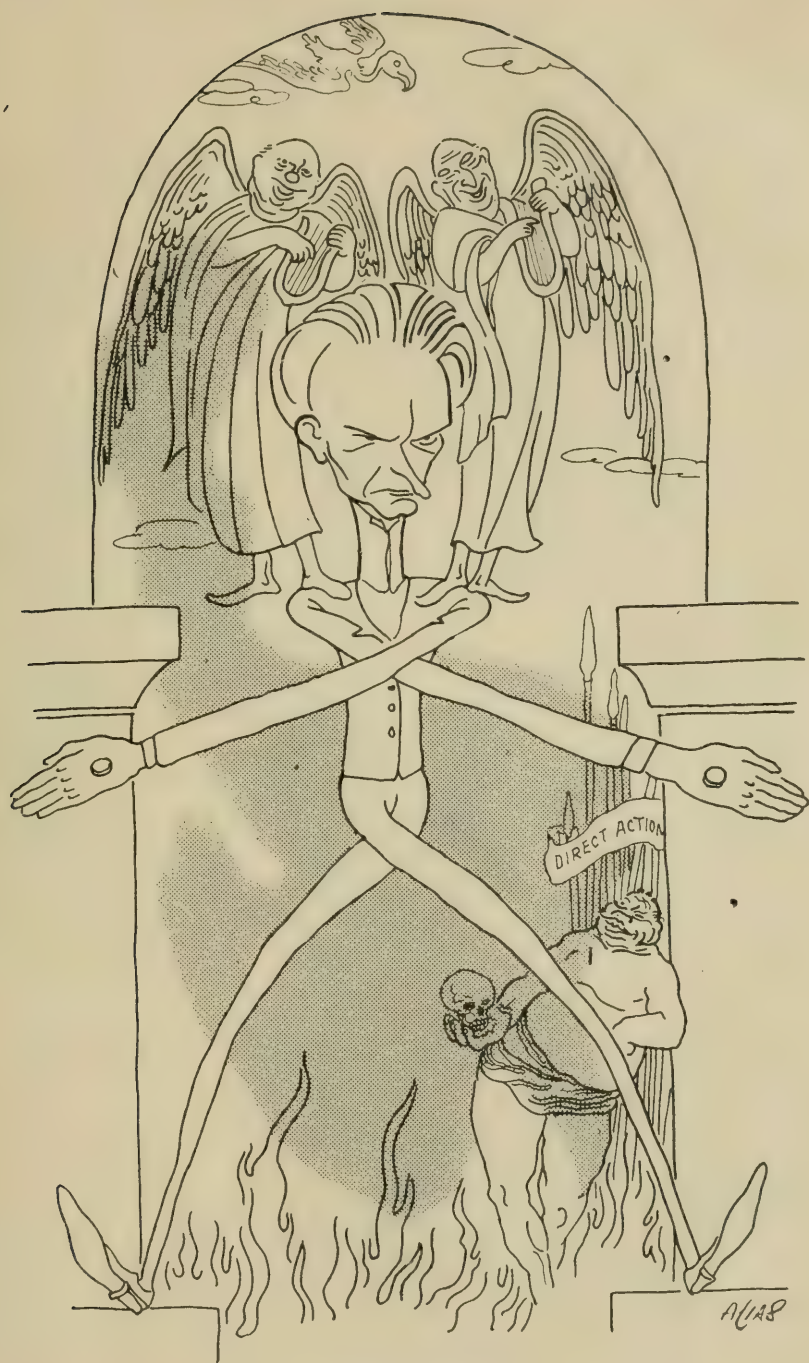


TEN

PROPHET OF TWO-NATION THEORY

“**A**nd here is my god-son, prophet of the two-nation theory.”

TWENTYSIX



ELEVEN

THE MIRACLE

“B ut the days of miracle are not yet over,” confessed Mr Communism with a sigh.



TWELVE

A REPLY TO 'QUIT INDIA'

“Y et I had my ghastly mission to fulfil, and glory to win.”



THIRTEEN

THE STORY OF SINDBAD RETOLD

“**L**ike the old man on Sindbad’s shoulders, I goaded my man on to the promised land of Pakistan. It was his doom.”



FOURTEEN

ANTI-BRITISH ROLE

“I am no student of history ; I rather make history. My path is not strewn with roses. Often I have to encounter opposition. No, the Muslims have not always been Pro-British. That's not the fact. Twice they rose in rebellion against the British. The first rebellion came in the form of the great Wahabi movement. Lord Mayo was a victim to it in the far-off Andamans.”



FIFTEEN

WHEN THE TWO UNITED

“But your Imperial masters trembled in their shoes when the two united during the glorious Khilafat days,” I reminded him.

“Oh yes, they did,” he readily agreed, and added after a pause, “My presence had never before been more urgently needed. They soon summoned me here.”



SIXTEEN

THE PARTING KICK

“**A**nd the Britisher had his revenge. He had to quit India, but he had had the satisfaction of maiming her before he left. Partition was his parting kick.”



SEVENTEEN

A NEW JOB

“**A**las ! No rest for me. I had to open
a new field of action in Kashmir.”

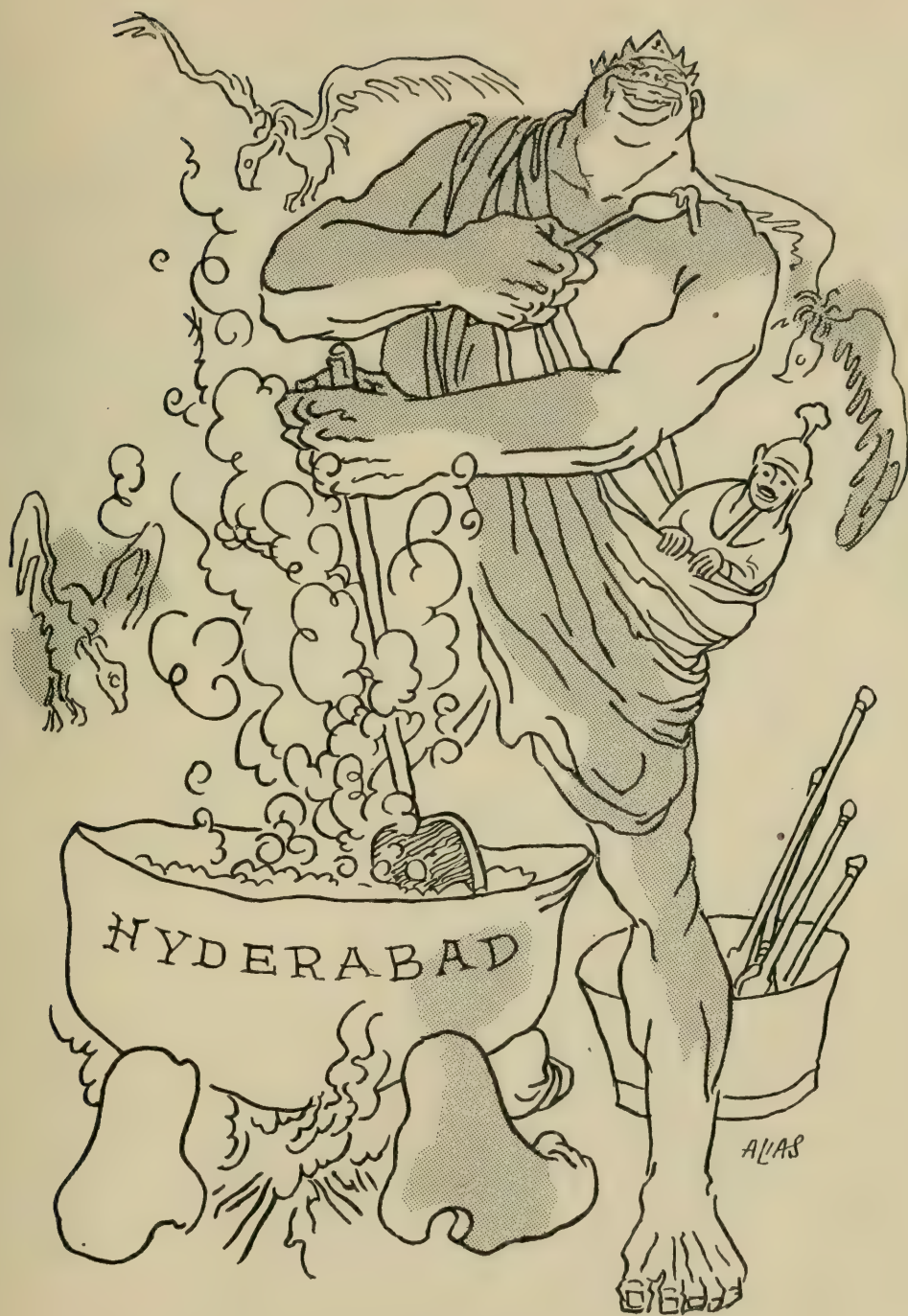


EIGHTEEN

HYDERABAD

“**A**nd there loomed large in the political horizon the inevitable Hyderabad !”

FORTYTWO



NINETEEN

REFUGEES

“**T**hen began the mass exodus to and from Pakistan. History was made anew. It was by far the biggest exodus of people ever recorded in history.”



TWENTY

THE NIGHTMARE COMES TRUE
(THE TRANSFIGURATION)

“B ut a wily Providence had reserved the shock of life for me. Gandhiji scored a clean victory by his martyrdom, and laid me low. Oh, the pity of it!”



*“Religion binds man to
God and man to man.”—*

GANDHIJI

RUPEES FOUR ONLY

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